

Federal Land Use Policies Are Changing Everything

What this means for rural land markets in 2026

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THE DATA

18.7%

Increase in Federal Land Leases

Across the U.S., federal agencies are leasing agricultural land to private operators at a record rate.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has seen an 18.7% increase in land lease agreements with private developers since January 2026, signaling a major shift in how public land is being utilized for commercial agriculture and agtech innovation. This trend is particularly pronounced in the South and Great Plains regions.



Source: USDA NASS · Published August 25, 2026

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Rural Land as Strategic Infrastructure

Federal leasing of agricultural land isn’t just about short-term revenue—it’s positioning rural areas as key nodes in national climate resilience and food security strategies. This shift is redefining land values in states like Texas, North Carolina, and Colorado where federal agencies are investing heavily.



02

A New Model for Land Investment

As more public lands become available through leasing, investors are shifting from speculative ownership to operational partnerships. This trend is especially strong in regions with high agtech potential such as the Texas Hill Country and the Southeastern U.S., where climate adaptation needs drive demand for land-based innovation.

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